

PENNSYLVANIA—COMMISSIONERS NORTHERN LIBERTIES AND KENSINGTON—PORT OF ENTRY, PHILADELPHIA.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 382.]

JUNE 6, 1834.

PHILADELPHIA, May 29, 1832.

DEAR SIR: The undersigned, a committee appointed at a meeting of a joint committee from the Boards of Commissioners of the districts of the Northern Liberties and Kensington, respectfully submit to you the views of the two boards on the subject of the extension of the Philadelphia port of entry and delivery.

They are at a loss, notwithstanding all that has been said against it by the collectors of said port, to perceive any good reason for denying this extension. The objections urged are, that the wharves along the line of the Delaware within our districts are destitute of storehouses, and without accommodations for foreign vessels; that the officers of the customs would have to be increased, and that the facilities for smuggling would be much greater than at present.

It strikes us that these objections are extremely fallacious. It is admitted that our districts are progressing rapidly in improvement in the increase of the number of houses and inhabitants. They are the great avenues through which the greater part of the imports into Philadelphia flow, and are distributed over the country. The district of the Northern Liberties, extending along the Delaware from Vine street to the Cocksink creek, (where the district of Kensington commences,) is as thickly populated and closely built upon as any part of the city of Philadelphia, and cannot in any one particular be distinguished from it. The buildings are as good, the inhabitants as enterprising, and trade and business as flourishing. The only perceptible difference is the dull inactivity which prevails along her wharves, and which the extension of the port would soon change into life, bustle, and business.

Immediately west, and contiguous to the Northern Liberties, is the *district of Spring Garden*, with her beautiful streets and splendid buildings, stretching forth westwardly almost to the Schuylkill, rivalling in some places the most beautiful parts of the adjoining city.

Why, then, we ask, should not the port of entry be extended? In what does the Northern Liberties differ from the city of Philadelphia? Its wharves are as good and convenient, and can afford as many facilities for shipping. But it is said there are no storehouses; and, permit us to say there never will be any until the port is extended. It would be the height of folly to erect storehouses and other conveniences for commerce, when we are denied such privileges as would enable us to reap any advantage from them.

At the Cohocksink creek, where the district of the Northern Liberties ends, that of Kensington commences, and extends along the line of the Delaware to Gunner's run or Palmer's creek. This district, although not so thickly populated nor so maturely improved as the Northern Liberties, is, nevertheless, advancing with rapid strides in the career of improvement, and in a very short time will not be behind her neighbor. It was formerly objected to extending the port, that the streets in this district were not all paved. This difficulty is now obviated, and can, therefore, be insisted on no longer.

From the location of these districts on the Delaware, and the various means of intercourse which will be afforded by the present system of internal improvement, a large amount of produce from the northern and western section of our country will necessarily pass along their river front, and be prevented from stopping and permitting us to participate in its benefits, because we are not possessed of the same privileges which are enjoyed by our more fortunate neighbors—the privileges of a port of entry and delivery.

At the mouth of Gunner's run, in the Kensington district, which will most probably be the place where the Delaware canal will discharge in the river, the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company have a large and extensive establishment for landing their coal. And we may add that all the coal yards upon the Delaware lay along the line for which we ask the privileges of a port. As the greater part of this coal is carried by coasting vessels to other ports, great inconvenience has already been experienced for want of port privileges. This inconvenience increases, and will continue to increase in proportion to the multiplication of our improvements.

The Northern Liberty and Penn Township railroad, to lead from the Columbia railroad, and terminate at the Delaware at a point within the bounds of the proposed extension of the port, will, it is supposed, be actively proceeded in, and soon completed. By this means a great amount of the produce of the interior will reach the banks of the Delaware in our districts. Why, then, we again ask, shall not the bounds of the port be extended, and we be permitted to enjoy the benefits of our own improvements? Do not the interests of commerce, the welfare of our districts, and justice to their inhabitants, imperiously demand its extension?

The objection that an increase of the officers of the customs would be required, we consider as altogether unimportant. If, as we contend, the port of entry should in strict and rigid justice be extended to us, the paltry stipends of a few additional officers should not be invoked to defeat our right. Besides, we do not conceive, with the greatest respect to the opinions of Mr. Barker, that an increase of officers would be necessary, believing that there is now an abundance of officers, if properly distributed, to inspect and guard the whole extent of the port, even enlarged as we desire it.

As to the facilities which it is alleged an extension of the port would afford for smuggling, we will make but one remark, that, if this objection be permitted to prevail in this instance, it must forever remain an insuperable barrier to our wishes. For it is impossible for us to fit up our wharves with stores and other accommodations for commercial purposes, when we are denied by the laws of the land from engaging in commerce. If the General Government will permit us to share with the city and

Southwark in the benefits and advantages of a port of entry, our wharves will soon abound with storehouses; and all those accommodations for smuggling alluded to by the collectors will soon be supplied by more profitable and beautiful improvements.

From our situation and natural and artificial advantages, we believe ourselves entitled to an extension of the port of entry and delivery, and we sincerely trust that it may no longer be denied to us.

JNO. HEWSON, Jr. *Kensington.*

JACOB FRISHMUTH.

W. BINDER, *President of the
Board of Commissioners, N. Liberties.*

HON. JNO. G. WATMOUGH.

May 31, 1832.

DEAR SIR: Enclosed is the letter agreed on to be sent to Washington. You are to enclose it in a letter of your own directed to Col. Watmough. Please request Col. Watmough to hand it to the Secretary of the Treasury.

Yours truly,

CHARLES NAYLOR.

WM. BINDER, Esq.

The joint committee have instructed me to forward to you their opinions in relation to the extension of the port of entry and delivery on the river Delaware into our districts. You will therefore use your influence with the Secretary of the Treasury to grant the wishes of the citizens in those districts.

Your truly,

WM. BINDER,

President Board of Commissioners, N. Liberties.

JOHN G. WATMOUGH, Esq.

